Report FBI Didn't Look Into a Ruby-Cuba Link

Jack Ruby
Did he visit Castro?

By PAUL MESKIL

Soon after President Kennedy was murdered, the FBI received information that Jack Ruby had made a secret trip to Cuba before the assassination. But the FBI apparently failed to verify this report or determine whether Ruby had been involved in a plot to kill the President.

The Senate Internal Security Committee also knew about Ruby's alleged trip to Havana. Committee investigator Al Tarabochia told The News yesterday that he had heard about the mystery mission two months after Kennedy was slain in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963. Two days after the assassination, Ruby killed the accused assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, in the basement of Dallas police headquarters.

On Jan. 27, 1964, Tarabochia wrote the following memo for the Internal Security Committee:

"On Jan. 24, 1964, the writer was advised by Jose Gonzalez Lanuza of the Cuban Student Directorate (an anti-Castro group that was then active in Miami and New Orleans) that there were indications of a trip to Cuba made by Jack Ruby in 1963. Gonzalez added that sources inside Cuba had revealed that Ruby had traveled to the Communist island from Mexico late in 1962 or 1963.

"Further investigation revealed that Jack Ruby had visited a Solomon Pratkin or Paskin in Havana. Paskin owns and operates a curio shop in Havana, across from the Hotel Seville. Paskin's residence is on Prado between the streets of Animas and Trocadero.

"Mr. Carlos Valdez-Fauli (a Cuban exile then living in Miami) reported to the writer that he had received a letter from a relative in Havana in which the above information was related.

"Mr. Valdez-Fauli, when contacted on the evening of Jan. 27, stated that he had surrendered the letter to agent James O'Connor of the Federal Bureau of Investigation after the agent contacted him at his place of employment that same afternoon. Mr. Valdez-Fauli added that the letter was dated December 1963, and the reference to Ruby's trip to Cuba was, 'Last year, the assassin of President Kennedy's assassin visited Paskin at his home. Paskin is a friend and a client of Ruby.'"

Paskin was not further identified. Tarabochia said yesterday that his Cuban contacts had expressed the belief that Paskin was "sympathetic to the Castro regime," as his shop had not been confisticated and he was one of the few Americans still doing business in Cuba in 1963.

Tarabochia said also that his memo had noted, "This information has to be verified," but that no followup was made by his office. He said he had not seen the letter, which was turned over to the FBI.

A former member of the staff of the Warren Commission, which investigated the Kennedy murder and concluded there had been no conspiracy, told The News that the FBI had never told the commission about the Valdez-Fauli letter. Other federal sources said the FBI apparently had buried the letter in its files without attempting to find out whether Ruby had made a secret trip to Cuba and, if so, why he had gone there.

Frank Sturgis, a convicted Watergate burglar and former CIA contact agent, recently told the Senate Intelligence Committee that Ruby had flown to Cuba from Mexico City in the summer of 1963 and conferred with Fidel Castro about the possibility of killing Kennedy. But no evidence of such a meeting has come to light.

Tarabochia said his memo, a copy of which was recently given to the Intelligence Committee, contained only "raw intelligence, third-hand information that was never confirmed."